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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, SE WILLIAMSON, NSC
FOR BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/08/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: INTERNAL INTRIGUE SHROUDS SUDANESE RESPONSE TO
AMERICAN VISIT

REF: A. KHARTOUM 312

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 300

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Foreign Minister Deng Alor worries that infighting among NCP factions could jeopardize discussions on a workplan to alleviate suffering in Darfur and improve relations with the West before such an initiative even gets started. The SPLM is also concerned about keeping focus on CPA-related issues, especially Abyei, in any such discussions. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge Fernandez met with Foreign Minister Deng Alor the evening of March 8, right before Alor's departure with President Al-Bashir on a 3-day State visit to the United Arab Emirates. Alor said infighting and intrigue had heated up in the past few days within both the National Congress Party (NCP) and Government of National Unity (GNU) on how best to respond to an American non-paper (reftel). While several working groups were meticulously looking into issues raised by the document and the regime was eager to explore options with the Americans, the fissures with both the NCP and GNU were quite apparent. Alor himself had been criticized by NCP hardliners for "acting like a mediator or third-party in Washington" rather than aggressively presenting the GNU's policies to the United States as former FM Lam Akol had done. Charge wryly noted that Akol's last meeting with Secretary Rice, in 2006, had gone quite poorly and was certainly no model to follow.

[1](#)3. (C) There had also been questioning and backbiting within the NCP about SE Williamson's call for a single point of contact within the Sudanese Government on bilateral concerns.

Some saw this as a way of precluding the eventual possibility of full normalization of relations between the U.S. and Sudan, while others feared that it would empower the official chosen, probably hardliner Nafie Ali Nafie, in his bitter rivalry with Vice President Taha. Alor said that the consensus was that MFA U/S Mutriff Siddiq, who has long-standing ties with Taha but is friendly with Nafie, would take the initial lead with the Americans, coordinating closely with Nafie. He heads the team currently studying the American non-paper. Siddiq ably negotiated for Sudan the 2006 Addis Ababa accord with the UN which created the Hybrid Force we now call UNAMID. A soft-spoken, convinced Islamist with an intelligence background, Siddiq was also a negotiator on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and on ongoing talks with the SPLM on CPA implementation. Embassy Khartoum worked closely with Siddiq in successfully facilitating the arrival of additional Rwandan peacekeepers on USAF transports in October 2007.

[1](#)4. (C) Alor said that the SPLM had been warned through an

unusual channel that "now that we have broken the ice with the Americans" the NCP intends to discard the SPLM from any future role in discussions with the U.S. administration. This message had been delivered to the SPLM by NISS intelligence chief Salah Ghosh through his SPLM chosen deputy. Charge asked Alor whether Ghosh was trying to be helpful to the SPLM or confuse them. Alor said that, in this instance at least, Ghosh's warning tracked with the party's own evidence. The SPLM intended to assign a trustworthy official, perhaps GOSS Minister of Regional Cooperation Barnaba Benjamin, to be their eyes and ears at any bilateral discussion.

¶15. (C) "They are just suspicious," noted Alor. Suspicious of falling victim to American trickery and suspicious of missing an opportunity for progress. "You can see them weighing what is best, whether to deal straightforwardly with you or not." CDA responded that, as SE Williamson noted many times, they would be wise to be clear, precise and above board and whoever talks to the Americans should be fully empowered or ready to get the green light from Khartoum, especially on military and intelligence-related issues affecting items such as UNAMID deployment or Darfur humanitarian concerns.

¶16. (C) Another concern the SPLM has is that the NCP will use any discussion or exchange with the Americans to the detriment of CPA implementation, especially on the Abyei issue. He recalled that there had been some progress on paper in discussing potential borders, but the issue of oil had not been resolved "we will need your help on the topic of post-2011 oil revenues in Abyei and the South." Charge repeated Williamson's and Secretary Rice's remarks that we are ready to help on Abyei and related issues, in a low-key manner, if we are asked by the two parties. Alor said that Cabinet Affairs Minister Pagan Amun is trying to work out a solution with VP Taha and State Minister Ahmed Haroun. He joked that Haroun, an indicted ICC suspect, "is always

respectful and helpful with us" unlike others in the NCP. Charge responded that Haroun must be one of Sudan's more respectful killers. In a separate meeting, one of Alor's own employees - Americas Department Office Director Al-Sanosi - told Charge that the NCP fears that satisfying the Americans on Abyei will encourage the SPLM to harden their position and stick to maximalist demands regarding Sudan's oil wealth.

¶17. (C) Comment: The always jovial Alor believes that the NCP, as a whole, sincerely wants to discuss issues of bilateral concern with the Americans but worries that they may be so riven by internal rivalries (and competition with the SPLM) that they may not be able to deliver what they agree to, despite Al-Bashir's protestations to the contrary (reftels). It will be necessary to politely and consistently highlight to the Sudanese, as has been done previously, that any understanding with the United States must be kept in full and to the letter. End comment.

FERNANDEZ